

PROCEEDINGS
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AN ADDITIONAL FORM OF THE SOUTH AMERICAN
GRASSHOPPER SPARROW

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A recent check on the forms of the South American Grasshopper Sparrow, *Myospiza humeralis* has brought to attention a very distinct subspecies, hitherto unrecognized, in collections made in the arid Guajira Peninsula of northeastern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela. The new form may be known as

Myospiza humeralis pallidula, subsp. nov.

Characters: Similar to *Myospiza humeralis humeralis* (Bosc)¹ but decidedly paler above, with the dark streaking much reduced both on back and crown, the brown edgings more extensive and lighter in color, and the gray tones lighter; sides and flanks paler; definitely lighter colored than any of the other known races.

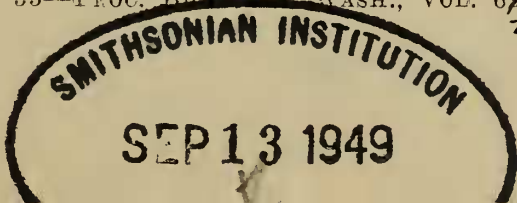
Description: Type, U. S. Nat. Mus. No. 370,276, male adult, from Maicao, Guajira, Colombia, taken April 14, 1941, by A. Wetmore and M. A. Carriker, Jr. (orig. no. 11,385). Center of crown pale smoke gray, bordered on either side by broad darker bands where the feather centers are dull black bordered narrowly with pale smoke gray anteriorly, the paler border replaced posteriorly by edgings of sayal brown that become progressively broader, until at the level of the center of the crown they largely replace the black; superciliary line from base of bill to about center of eye wax yellow, changing then to pale smoke gray; hindneck, back and rump sayal brown, with edgings of pale smoke gray; middle of back with restricted median dull black streaks; rump and upper tail-coverts wood brown, with slightly paler edgings and concealed darker shaft streaks; bend of wing empire yellow, changing to pale lemon yellow beneath the alula; primaries and secondaries fuscous; wing-coverts vinaceous-buff changing externally to tilleul-buff, with concealed portions dull black; primary coverts fuscous, edged lightly with vinaceous-buff; primaries edged narrowly with tilleul-buff; secondaries bordered broadly with sayal brown, this edging changing distally to tilleul-buff; rectrices fuscous, edged narrowly with tilleul-buff, and tipped indistinctly with dull vinaceous-buff; lores and space around eye dull grayish white; cheeks light grayish olive, with a narrow post-ocular streak of sayal brown; throat, lower breast and abdomen dull white; upper breast and sides dull light buff; flanks and under tail-coverts dull pinkish buff; under wing-coverts white; inner webs of primaries toward base vinaceous-buff as seen from underneath. Maxilla fuscous-black, mandible light drab; tarsus and toes wood brown (from dried skin).

Measurements: Male, type, wing 58.2, tail 48.0, culmen from base 11.4, tarsus 19.2 mm.

Females (2 specimens), wing 56.0-56.7, tail 44.1-44.4, culmen from base 11.7-11.9, tarsus 19.3-19.8 mm.

Range: The Guajira Peninsula, where recorded at Maicao, Puerto

¹*Tanagra humeralis* Bosc, Journ. Hist. Nat. (Choix des Mém.), vol. 2, no. 17, September 1, 1792, p. 179, pl. 34, fig. 4. (Cayenne.).



g.
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López and Puerto Estrella, Colombia, and at Paraguaipoa, Zulia, Venezuela.

Remarks: In the vast range of *Myospiza humeralis*, from Colombia and Venezuela south to northern Patagonia, there is considerable individual variation within comparatively narrow limits, but except for the new form here described, relatively slight differences that can be correlated with geographic distribution as a basis to separate subspecies. One of the principal individual variants, found mainly in *M. h. humeralis*, is an occasional example of a slightly rufescent phase. The more northwestern birds in northern Colombia are darker, and are recognized as the subspecies *columbiana*. The more southern ones are grayer and are separable as *xanthornus*. The race *tarijensis*, which is not available to me at the moment, as said to resemble *xanthornus* but to differ in slightly larger size. Other names that have been proposed fall as synonyms.

It has been a matter of note therefor to find that the Guajira birds are set apart from all others, completely and definitely, by their decidedly paler coloration. This is especially remarkable when it is recalled that many regions in the far south inhabited by these birds are equally arid. While Carriker and I prepared only three specimens, these differ so radically from all others seen that I have no hesitance in describing them as a new form. In fact I find that I noted in my journals their pale color when seen in life. The three that we secured come from Maicao and Puerto López where the birds were fairly common. Others were seen at Puerto Estrella to the north of the point last mentioned.

W. H. Phelps, Jr., has kindly compared for me two males in the Phelps Collection from Paraguaipoa in the Venezuelan section of the Guajira Peninsula, his observations demonstrating that these two birds are *pallidula* as indicated by their paler color. This point is probably near the southern limit of the race.

